



E-NEWS from *Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn*

An electronic legislative update for June 28, 2002

Did you know?

- Nearly one in three jobs in Washington State depend on trade.
- 33 percent of Washington commodities—valued at \$1.8 billion are bound for the international markets.
- Congresswoman Dunn and Port of Tacoma Deputy Executive Director Timothy Farrell spoke before the Ways and Means Committee regarding a proposal to move the US Customs Service from the Department of Treasury to the new Department of Homeland Security.
- Jennifer and Tim both discussed the importance of balancing safe and secure borders with keeping Washington State's trade-related industries competitive.

What is going on this week?

US HOUSE APPROVES "MEDICARE MODERNIZATION AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACT OF 2002"

Early this morning, the US House passed a bill that will create a prescription drug benefit for seniors and increase Medicare payments to doctors, hospitals and health care plans. The bill provides additional assistance for low-income seniors. Jennifer co-authored the bill and said that it will be of particular benefit to women because they live longer than men, are more likely to develop chronic illness and live on fewer retirement dollars. The increase in Medicare payments will bring an additional \$460 million to Washington State.

A SUMMARY OF THE HOUSE REPUBLICAN “MEDICARE MODERNIZATION AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG ACT” IS AS FOLLOWS:

- It creates a voluntary prescription drug benefit for all seniors.
- The annual deductible will be \$250 with a \$33 a month premium. The premium, deductible and co-payments will be waived for seniors living at 150 percent of the poverty level (about \$15,000) and reduced for seniors living up to 175 percent of poverty (about \$17,500).
- Medicare will pay 80 percent of prescriptions between \$251 and \$1,000 a year on drugs and 50 percent for \$1,001 and \$2,000. (Two thirds of seniors spend less than \$2,000 a year on prescription drugs.)
- Medicare will also pay 100 percent of the total cost of drugs above \$3,700 a year.
- The cost of drugs will be lowered by up to 30 percent for all seniors because the government will purchase drugs in bulk and pass the savings along to patients.
- The bill will modernize Medicare by increasing payments to doctors, hospitals and health care plans. For Washington State, this means an increase of nearly \$460 million over the next several years.

HOUSE PASSES MEASURE TO ADVANCE TRADE LEGISLATION

The US House has approved a measure that will allow House and Senate leaders to proceed with negotiations on Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation. Both chambers have passed separate measures giving the President expanded trade negotiating authority. Major differences exist, however, between the two bills requiring that differences be worked out before the bill can proceed through Congress and reach the President’s desk for signature. For example the Senate and House have different approaches on how to deliver health care to workers who lose their jobs due to trade.

HOUSE APPROVES RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

One day after the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that it is unconstitutional for schools to allow students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, the US House overwhelmingly passed a Resolution expressing support for the right for students to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and disapproval of the court’s decision. Jennifer called the ruling ridiculous and insulting. (See related press release summary)

US HOUSE APPROVES JENNIFER'S REQUEST FOR \$20.6 MILLION FOR DEFENSE-RELATED PROJECTS

The US House has approved the fiscal year 2003 defense spending bill including \$20.6 million for defense-related projects that benefit Washington State and the 8th congressional district. Highlights of approved projects are as follows;

- \$3 million for Click2Learn in Bellevue for continuing development of online educational software for national guard members;
- \$8 million for Microvision, which is located in Bothell for retinal display technology for the Army and to improve image technology for both military and medical application;
- \$8.1 for BAE systems for counter drug aircraft photo technology and digital pilot software;
- \$1.5 million for Pratt and Whitney Seattle Aerospace Center in Bellevue to improve Naval missile technology.

The Senate is expected to consider the bill next month.

What we did last week:

HOUSE APPROVES SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAM PROTECTION ACT 2002

The US House approved a bill to protect the nearly 7 million recipients of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) who are unable to manage their own financial affairs. The legislation aims to reduce fraud committed by those who have power of attorney over Social Security and SSI recipients by strengthening oversight by the Social Security Administration. It also calls for tougher standards for those who oversee the financial affairs of these individuals who are often vulnerable. In addition, the bill will allow the recovery of misused benefits through a payment recovery process.

HOUSE APPROVES FINAL VERSION OF THE SMALL BUSINESS PAPERWORK RELIEF ACT

The final version of the "Small Business Paperwork Relief Act" will be considered by the House this week. The bill requires each agency to establish one point of contact to act as a liaison between small businesses and the agency regarding paperwork requirements and it requires each agency to make further efforts to reduce paperwork for small businesses with less than 25 employees. The Office of Management and Budget estimated that in 1998, the American people spent over seven billion hours filling out forms and compiling records for the federal government. For firms with fewer than 20 employees, paperwork regulations cost small businesses an average of \$2,017 per employee, per year. A similar bill passed both the House and Senate last spring. This bill is the final version and incorporates minor changes between the House and Senate versions.

Summary of Press Releases:

US REP JENNIFER DUNN RELEASES STATEMENT REGARDING 9TH CIRCUIT COURT DECISION THAT PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL

"Today's ruling is both ridiculous and insulting. It is further evidence of the need for new judges—who represent the views of the nation—to be appointed to many of our courts. The foundation of our nation is based on a belief in God and the principles expressed in the Pledge of Allegiance and Constitution. Individuals who choose not to participate in citing the Pledge of Allegiance still have every right to do so. It is no wonder that the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals is the most overturned court in the nation. I am confident that today's decision will be no exception."

US REP JENNIFER DUNN LAUNCHES 8TH DISTRICT LISTENING TOUR TO DISCUSS MEDICARE AND OTHER ISSUES BEFORE CONGRESS; Dunn to begin series of listening tour meetings in Issaquah, Kent, North Bend, Bellevue and Maple Valley

During the upcoming Independence Day District Work Period, Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn has scheduled a series of meetings to discuss among other things, the important issue of Medicare. Meetings next week are scheduled for Issaquah, Kent, North Bend, Bellevue and Maple Valley. A summary of the upcoming meeting and their locations are as follows:

Monday, July 1, 6:00-7:30 PM, North Bend Town Hall Meeting: Mt. Si Senior Center, 411 Main Ave. S, North Bend.

Tuesday, July 2, 10:30 – 11:30 AM: Meeting on Medicare at Issaquah Middle School Commons. 400 1st Ave. SE, Issaquah.

12:00 PM: Following the Medicare meeting, Congresswoman Dunn will visit the Issaquah Senior Center for lunch. The address to the senior center is 105 2nd Ave., Issaquah.

6:00-7:30 PM, Maple Valley Town Hall Meeting: Maple Valley Community Center, 22010 SE 248th St, Maple Valley.

Wednesday, July 3, 9:30–11:00 AM: Kent Senior Activity Center, 600 East Smith, Kent.

12:00 PM – Following the Kent seniors' meeting, Congresswoman Dunn will visit the North Bellevue Community and Senior Center for lunch. The center is located at 4063 148th Ave. NE .